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SUBJECT: MAY 25 SESSION OF GRANVILLE/ABBAS MURDER TRIAL

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: On May 25, 2009, U.S. Embassy Foreign Service National (FSN) employees from the Regional Security Office, Political/Economic, and Public Affairs sections attended the trial of five Sudanese men accused in the January 1, 2008 murders of USAID Officer John Granville and FSN driver Abdelrahman Abbas. The court called one witness to testify, Brigadier Saleem Imo Hassan Musa, who is a weapons expert in the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF). During the May 17th trial session, the defense claimed that ammunition casings found at the scene of the crime could only be used to identify the type of weapon fired and not the specific weapon used to commit the crime. Musa refuted this by pointing out that various weapons use the same ammunition, and that identification of a specific weapon can be linked to the markings left on the shell casing. The next court date is scheduled for June 1, 2009, when the prosecution will submit its closing argument in written format to the judge. The defense will present its written closing argument on June 10, 2009, with a verdict announcement scheduled to be released at 11:00 a.m. on June 24, 2009. END SUMMARY

¶2. (U) The trial of the five Sudanese men accused of the January 1, 2008 murders of USAID Officer John Granville and FSN driver Abdelrahman Abbas continued on May 25, 2009. The prosecution was represented by Chair Mohamed Mustafa Musa, Juma Al Wakul Al-Asir, and Granville family attorney Taha Ibrahim. Abbas family attorney, Ismail Abu Sugra, was absent. The defense was represented by deputy defense Chair Adil Abdul Ghani and Wajdi Salih. Defense Chair, Siddiq Kadoda, and Ahmed Abu Alga were not present. Security was unusually tight in the court room. There was a large number of police officers present. Those attending were also screened by K-9 units.

¶3. (U) In order to clarify testimony presented by the defense and prosecution weapons experts, the court called Brigadier Saleem Imo Hassan Musa, an active duty officer in the SAF, to testify. Musa currently serves as an Inspector General in the SAF Ammunition and Explosives Department. He received weapons training from Russia and also attended numerous seminars on ballistic analysis in Egypt, England, Syria and the U.S.

¶4. (U) The court began the questioning by asking Musa if ammunition is the principal factor in determining which type of weapon was used. Musa stated that weapons fire specific types of ammunition. Musa was shown a variety of random 9 mm and 8 mm pistols. Based on the shell casings found on the ground at the crime scene, Musa stated that a 9 mm caliber pistol was the only weapon that could have fired the 9 mm rounds. Musa also stated that a variety of Kalashnikov automatic rifles could have fired ammunition matching the caliber of the shell casings found in the vehicle. Musa explained that each casing will have unique markings based on the weapon from which it is fired.

¶5. (U) The prosecution asked the witness which government entity is responsible for matching the casings found at crime scenes with those fired in test experiments. Musa stated that the Sudanese

Police Criminal Investigations Division (CID) is responsible for matching the casings as they have the proper ballistic analysis equipment.

¶6. (U) The defense asked the witness about the relationship between the SAF and the CID. Musa responded that the SAF does not have the sort of equipment used by CID. The defense asked Musa if he agreed with the statement, "The ammunition used is the most important factor when identifying markings." Musa disagreed, saying it is the weapon that is the most important factor. The defense argued that different types of weapons could fire similar caliber rounds. Musa agreed, but clarified that the type of munitions could vary even though they are the same caliber. The defense argued that a tight grouping of 9 mm rounds can only be fired by an automatic weapon and not by a pistol. Musa argued that a pistol could fire a tight shot group.

¶7. (U) The prosecution's written closing arguments are due by June 1, 2009. The defense will have an opportunity review the prosecution's argument before submitting their final written closing argument on June 10, 2009. The verdict is scheduled to be released at 11:00 a.m. on June 24, 2009.

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